

Appl. No.: 09/930,905

Filed: 8/16/01

Page 5

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-11, 13, and 15-21 have been allowed and claim 14 was objected to. Claims 22-26, 28-30, and 32-35 were rejected. Claims 22-26, 28-30, and 32-35 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 22-35 in a divisional or continuing application. The cancellation of claims 22-26, 28-30 and 32-35 obviated all of the rejections in the Office Action.

Claim 14 was amended to correct obvious errors. No new matter was entered by way of this amendment.

The Objection to the Claims Should Be Withdrawn

Claim 14 was objected to for not referring to the singular form of the Markush group members when they are preceded by the article "a". Claim 14 has been amended to recite the singular form of the words, and accordingly, the objection to claim 14 has been obviated.

CONCLUSIONS

The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection of claim 14 and allow claims 1-11, 13-21. In any event, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the above amendments for purposes of further prosecution. The amendments were not made earlier because the Applicant earnestly believes the claims were in condition for allowance and the claims are novel and non-obvious. All the amendments made herein were made pursuant to suggestions made by the Examiner.

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks, it is submitted that this application is now ready for allowance. Early notice to this effect is solicited.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required

Appl. No.: 09/930,905

Filed: 8/16/01

Page 6

therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

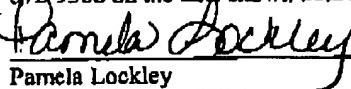


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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the US Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. 703-872-9306 on the date shown below.


Pamela Lockley

December 29, 2003

Date

RTA01/2146491v1